

**INTERCONNECTION AGREEMENT FOR THE TRANSPORT  
AND TERMINATION OF LOCAL TRAFFIC BETWEEN WIRELINE CARRIERS**

This Interconnection Agreement for the Transport and Termination of traffic between wireline carriers ("Agreement") is effective as of the 1st day of November, 2007 (the "Effective Date"), by and between Price County Telephone Company ("PRICE COUNTY") a Wisconsin Corporation, with its principal office at 105 North Avon Avenue, P.O. Box 108, Phillips, Wisconsin 54555-0108 and Charter Fiberlink, LLC. ("CHARTER") a Delaware limited liability company, with its principal office at 12405 Powerscourt Drive, St. Louis, MO 63131.

WHEREAS, PRICE COUNTY is an Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier ("ILEC") in the State of Wisconsin;

WHEREAS, CHARTER, is a Competitive Local Exchange Carrier ("CLEC") in the State of Wisconsin.

WHEREAS, Sections 251 and 252 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (the "Act"), have specific standards and procedures for Interconnection, and the Parties intend that this Agreement meets these standards and procedures; and

WHEREAS, the Parties wish to establish a Reciprocal Compensation and Interconnection arrangement as consistent with 47 U.S.C. 251; and

WHEREAS, the Parties desire to interconnect their respective ILEC and CLEC network facilities for the purpose of delivery of specific traffic for Transport and Termination on the other Party's network; and

WHEREAS, the Parties are entering into this Agreement to set forth the respective obligations and the terms and conditions under which they will interconnect their networks and provide other services as set forth herein; and

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual provisions contained herein and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY hereby agree as follows:

## **1.0 DEFINITIONS**

As used in this Agreement, the following terms shall have the meanings specified below in this Section. Any term used in this Agreement that is not specifically defined shall have the meaning ascribed to such term in the Communications Act of 1934, as amended. If no specific meaning exists for a specific term used in this Agreement, then normal usage in the telecommunications industry shall apply.

- 1.1** "Act" means the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and as from time-to-time interpreted in the duly authorized rules and regulations of the FCC or the Commission having authority to interpret the Act within its state of jurisdiction.
- 1.2** "Affiliate" is as Defined in the Act.
- 1.3** "As Defined in the Act" means as specifically defined in the Act.
- 1.4** "Applicable Law" means all laws, statutes, common law, regulations, ordinances, codes, rules, guidelines, orders, permits, and approvals of any government authority, which apply or relate to the subject of this Agreement.
- 1.5** "Basic Local Exchange Service" means a voice grade access to the network that provides: the ability to place and receive calls; touch-tone service; access to operator services; access to directory assistance; access to emergency services (E911); access to telephone relay service (TRS); access to interexchange carriers of the customer's choice; standard white pages directory listing; and toll blocking for low-income consumers participating in Lifeline (subject to technical feasibility).
- 1.6** "Bill-and-Keep Arrangement" means a compensation arrangement whereby the Parties do not render bills to each other for the termination of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic specified in this Agreement and whereby the Parties terminate Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic originating from end-users served by the networks of the other Party without charging among or between said carriers for such traffic exchange.
- 1.7** "CLLI Codes" means Common Language Location Identifier Code.
- 1.8** "Commission" means the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.
- 1.9** "Common Channel Signaling" (CCS) is a high-speed specialized packet-switched communications network that is separate (out-of-band) from the public packet-switched and message networks. CCS carries addressed signaling messages for individual Trunk circuits and/or database-related services between Signaling Points in the CCS network using SS7 signaling protocol.
- 1.10** "Competitive Local Exchange Carrier" is any company or person authorized to provide Basic Local Exchange Service by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin in certain service territories.
- 1.11** "DS-1" is a telecommunications service carried at digital signal rate of 1.544 Mbps.

- 1.12** "DS-3" is a telecommunications service carried at digital signal rate of 44.736 Mbps.
- 1.13** "Effective Date" means the date contained in the first paragraph of this Agreement.
- 1.14** "End Office Switch" is PRICE COUNTY's, or CHARTER's switch, head end or other similar switch facility or system, where telephone loops used to provide end user Exchange Service are terminated.
- 1.15** "Exchange Access Service", as used in this Agreement, shall mean the offering of access to telephone exchange services or facilities for the purpose of the origination or termination of telephone toll services, as defined by the FCC and the Commission.
- 1.16** "Exchange Service" means all Basic Local Exchange Service, or any other services offered to end users which provide end users with a telephonic connection to, and a unique telephone number address on, the Public Switched Telecommunications Network ("PSTN"), and which enable such end users to place or receive calls to all other stations on the PSTN.
- 1.17** "FCC" means the Federal Communications Commission.
- 1.18** "Incumbent Local Exchange Carrier" or "ILEC" is As Defined in the Act.
- 1.19** "Information Access Traffic," for the purpose of this Agreement, is traffic (excluding CMRS traffic) that is transmitted to or returned from the Internet at any point during the duration of transmission between the Parties. Information Access Traffic is not Local Traffic unless the traffic is between an end user and an ISP physically located in the same PRICE COUNTY Mandatory Local Calling Scope. The term Information Access Traffic does not include transmission of voice telecommunications traffic regardless of whether it is delivered to an ISP and regardless of whether it is carried at any point on facilities via Internet protocol. Information Access Traffic is not subject to Reciprocal Compensation between the Parties.
- 1.20** "Information Service Provider or "ISP", a provider of Information Service, as defined in 47 U.S.C. 153(20). Information Service Provider includes, but is not limited to, Internet Service Providers.
- 1.21** "Interconnection" is the direct or indirect connection of separate pieces of equipment, transmission facilities, etc., within, between and among networks, for the transmission and routing of Exchange Service and Exchange Access Service.
- 1.22** "Interconnection Facilities" are the physical transmission facilities by which the Parties will interconnect their respective networks for the purpose of exchanging traffic. These facilities are described in greater detail in Section 4.0 and Appendix A of this Agreement.
- 1.23** "IP-Enabled Voice Traffic" means any IP-Enabled, real-time, multidirectional voice call, including, but not limited to, service that mimics traditional telephony, IP-Enabled Voice Traffic includes:

**1.23.1** Voice traffic originating on either the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) or through an Internet Protocol Connection (IPC), and which terminates on either the PSTN or an IPC; and

**1.23.2** Voice traffic originating on the PSTN, which is transported through an IPC, and which ultimately, terminates on the PSTN.

**1.24** "ISP Bound Traffic" means Information Access Traffic that originates from or is directed, either directly or indirectly, to or through an ISP provider who is physically located in an exchange within the PRICE COUNTY Mandatory Local Calling Scope of the originating end user. Traffic originated from, directed to or through an ISP provider physically located outside the originating end user's PRICE COUNTY Mandatory Local Calling Scope area will be considered switched toll traffic and subject to access charges. ISP Bound Traffic does not include IP-Enabled Voice Traffic.

**1.25** "Interexchange Carrier (IXC)" is a telecommunications service provider authorized by the FCC to provide interstate long distance communication services between LATAs and is authorized by the Commission to provide inter- and/or intraLATA long distance communications services within the State.

**1.26** "IntraLATA Toll Traffic" means all IntraLATA calls other than Local Traffic.

**1.27** "Local Access and Transport Area" or "LATA" is a geographic area for the provision and administration of communications service, i.e., intraLATA or interLATA.

**1.28** "Local Exchange Carrier" or "LEC" is any company certified by the Commission to provide Basic Local Exchange Service.

**1.29** "Local Traffic" means Exchange Service traffic that is originated by an end user of one Party and terminated to the end user of the other Party within the scope of PRICE COUNTY's local serving area, including Mandatory Local Calling Scope arrangements, as described in PRICE COUNTY maps, tariffs or rate schedules filed with and ordered by the Commission. A Mandatory Local Calling Scope arrangement is an arrangement that provides end users a local calling scope, Extended Area Service ("EAS") and Extended Community Calling ("ECC"), beyond their basic local exchange serving area. Local Traffic does not include optional local calling scopes (i.e., optional rate packages that permit the end user to choose a local calling scope beyond their basic local exchange serving area for an additional fee) referred to as Optional EAS. Local Traffic also does not include Information Access Traffic or VNXX Traffic. Local Traffic does include IP-Enabled Voice Traffic that is originated and terminated within the PRICE COUNTY Mandatory Local Calling Scope and is not carried by an IXC.

**1.30** "Mandatory Local Calling Scope" is an arrangement that provides end users a local calling scope, and Extended Area Service (EAS) or Extended Community Calling (ECC) beyond their basic local exchange service area.

**1.31** "Mbps" means million bits per second.

- 1.32** “Mid-Span Meet” is an Interconnection architecture whereby two carriers’ transmission facilities meet at a mutually agreed-upon POI that is not at either Party’s End Office Switch.
- 1.33** “NPA” or the “Number Plan Area” also referred to as an “area code” refers to the three digit code which precedes the NXX in a dialing sequence and identifies the general calling area within the North American Numbering Plan scope to which a call is to be routed (i.e., NPA/NXX-XXXX).
- 1.34** “NXX” means the three-digit code that appears as the first three digits of a seven-digit telephone number within a valid area code (i.e., an NXX other than a special 500, 600, 700, 800 and 900 code).
- 1.35** “Party” means either PRICE COUNTY or CHARTER, and “Parties” means PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER.
- 1.36** “Point of Interconnection (POI)” means the point of demarcation where the Parties physically interconnect their networks for the exchange of telecommunications traffic between the Parties’ respective networks. The Point of Interconnection also serves as the demarcation point for both Parties’ operational and financial responsibility. The Point of Interconnection for this Agreement is as provided in Appendix A.
- 1.37** “Rate Center” means the specific geographic point (“Vertical and Horizontal” or “V & H” coordinates) and corresponding geographic area which are associated with one or more particular NPA-NXX codes which have been assigned to a ILEC for its provision of basic local exchange telecommunications services. The “rate center area” is the exclusive geographic area within which the LEC provides basic local exchange telecommunications service bearing the particular NPA-NXX designations associated with the specific Rate Center.
- 1.38** “Reciprocal Compensation” means an arrangement between two carriers in which each carrier receives compensation from the other carrier for the Transport and Termination on each carrier’s network of Local Traffic that originates from the network facilities of the other carrier.
- 1.39** “Signaling System 7 (SS7)” is the signaling protocol of the CCS network based upon American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards.
- 1.40** “Tandem” means a class 4 switching center, computer, or other equipment used to switch a call between two End Office Switches, an End Office Switch and another Tandem, or two Tandems.
- 1.41** “Tandem Transit Traffic” or “Transit Traffic” means traffic that originates on one party’s network and is transported through a third party’s network and/or Tandem substantially unchanged, and Terminates on another party’s network. Tandem switches and subtending End Office Switches shall be determined in accordance with and as defined in the Local Exchange Routing Guide (“LERG”). Switched Exchange Access Service traffic is not Tandem Transit Traffic, or Transit Traffic. Except as provided in Section 5.7.1 neither Party will transit a third party’s traffic to the other Party.

**1.42**“Telecommunications Carrier” is As Defined in the Act.

**1.43**“Termination” means the switching of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic at the terminating carrier’s End Office Switch, and delivery of such traffic to the called Party’s end user.

**1.44**“Transport” means the transmission and any necessary Tandem switching of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic from the Point of Interconnection, or meet point, between the Parties to the terminating carrier’s End Office Switch that directly serves the called Party’s end user.

**1.45**“Trunk” means a single transmission channel providing a direct, logical and functional Interconnection between two switching centers.

**1.46**“Type-2 Interconnection”, often referred to as a Trunk side connection, is a service that involves interconnection to an End Office Switch (Type-2B) or Tandem (Type-2A).

**1.47** "Virtual NXX Traffic (VNXX Traffic)" as used in this Agreement, is defined as calls in which a CHARTER end user is assigned a telephone number with an NXX Code (as set forth in the LERG) assigned to a Rate Center that is different from the Rate Center associated with the customer's actual physical premise location.

## **2.0 INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION**

**2.1** All references to Sections and Appendices shall be deemed to be references to Sections of, and Appendices to, this Agreement unless the context otherwise requires. The headings of the Sections are inserted for the convenience of references only and are not intended to be a part of or to affect the meaning of this Agreement. Unless the context otherwise requires, any reference to any agreement, statute, regulation, rule or tariff is for convenience of reference only and is not intended to be a part of or to affect the meaning of the rule or tariff as amended and supplemented from time-to-time (and in the case of a statute, regulation, rule or tariff to any successor provision).

**2.2** The Parties acknowledge that some of the services, facilities or arrangements described herein reference the terms of federal or state tariffs of the Parties. If any provision contained in this main body of the Agreement and any Appendix hereto cannot be reasonably construed or interpreted to avoid conflict, the provision contained in this main body of this Agreement shall prevail. If any provisions of this Agreement and an applicable tariff cannot be reasonably construed or interpreted to avoid conflict, the Parties agree that the provision contained in this Agreement including Appendices shall prevail. This Agreement, including Appendices, supersedes any prior agreements between the Parties.

## **3.0 SCOPE OF AGREEMENT**

**3.1** This Agreement shall cover the exchange of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic between PRICE COUNTY’s network in Wisconsin and CHARTER’s network in Wisconsin. All other traffic is governed by their applicable tariff and/or contract, and is not covered by this Agreement. The services hereunder are intended for wireline-to-wireline traffic only.

- 3.2** This Agreement does not obligate either Party to provide arrangements not specifically provided for herein. This Agreement has no effect on the: (i) definition of end user services that either Party offers to its end users; (ii) the services either Party chooses to offer to its respective end users; (iii) the rate levels or rate structures that either Party charges its end users for services; or (iv) the manner in which either Party provisions or terminates the services either Party provides to its respective end users.
- 3.3** CHARTER represents that it is a CLEC authorized by the Commission to provide Basic Local Exchange Services in certain areas of Wisconsin. For purposes of this Agreement CHARTER's authorized area to provide Basic Local Exchange Service is as provided in Appendix E.
- 3.4** The Parties agree that all Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic shall be exchanged via the Interconnection Facilities and arrangements described in Section 4.0 of this Agreement.
- 3.5** This Agreement provides for the Transport and Termination of traffic including:
- 3.5.1** CHARTER to PRICE COUNTY Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic that is:
- a. originated on the network of CHARTER;
  - b. delivered to the PRICE COUNTY network over the Interconnection Facilities pursuant to this Agreement; and
  - c. terminated on the network of PRICE COUNTY.
- 3.5.2** Intentionally Left Blank
- 3.5.3** PRICE COUNTY to CHARTER Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic that is:
- a. originated on the ILEC network of PRICE COUNTY;
  - b. delivered to CHARTER over the Interconnection Facilities pursuant to this Agreement; and
  - c. terminated on the network of CHARTER.
- 3.5.4** Intentionally Left Blank
- 3.5.5** Local Traffic or ISP Bound Traffic delivered by CHARTER through indirect Interconnection as provided in Section 4.4.

#### **4.0 INTERCONNECTION FACILITIES**

- 4.1 Description of Arrangements.** This Agreement provides for the following Interconnection Facilities as provided in Appendix A.I, and arrangements described in Section 4.4 between the networks of CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY. Routing of traffic shall be as described in this Section, except that alternatives may be employed in the event of emergency or temporary equipment failure, as mutually agreed by the Parties.
- 4.1.1** The Parties will provision Interconnection Facilities, as provided in Appendix A I., and arrangements described in Section 4.4 with each other for the exchange of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic. The Parties agree to

negotiate in good faith to promptly establish and implement the terms and conditions for such an Interconnection, which terms and conditions shall be consistent with the requirements of the Act.

- 4.1.2** If the Parties have established a direct Interconnection pursuant to Section 4.3, CHARTER is responsible for the provisioning of Transport facilities for the exchange of traffic from its network to the POI, as provided in Appendix A, and will pay the cost of such facilities. CHARTER may self, provision facilities or lease facilities from PRICE COUNTY or an alternate third party provider for the provision of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic Transport. PRICE COUNTY is responsible for the provisioning cost of Transport facilities for the exchange of traffic from its network to the POI. PRICE COUNTY will pay the cost of the facilities from the POI to PRICE COUNTY's Phillips End Office Switch. Notwithstanding the fact the Transport facility circuit may be provisioned by AT&T, or another carrier pursuant to an Access Service Request issued by CHARTER, PRICE COUNTY will, to the extent possible, compensate AT&T, or any other carrier providing the Transport facilities directly for the cost of the Transport facilities from the POI to PRICE COUNTY's Phillips End Office Switch. Otherwise, PRICE COUNTY will reimburse CHARTER for the cost of the Transport facility on PRICE COUNTY's side of the POI as described in Appendix A.
- 4.1.3** The Parties agree there will be separate and distinct Trunk groups for both Local Traffic, and for ISP Bound Traffic if required by Section 5.1.
- 4.1.4** If CHARTER chooses to self provision its own Transport facilities, lease Transport facilities from PRICE COUNTY, or any other third party provider, the same physical facility may be used for separate dedicated Trunks for the Transport of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic, as mutually agreed to by the Parties.
- 4.1.5** Neither Party will terminate IntraLATA or InterLATA toll Exchange Access Service traffic or originated untranslated traffic codes (e.g. 800, 888) over Local Trunks, or ISP Bound Trunks.
- 4.1.6** The Parties agree to establish a single Point of Interconnection per LATA for the direct exchange of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic between their respective networks as described in Appendix A. The POI shall serve as the demarcation point for both Parties' operational and financial responsibilities.
- 4.1.7** For all traffic exchanged, PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER shall provide each other, or the transit service carrier in the event the Parties are utilizing indirect Interconnection for the exchange of traffic, the proper signaling information (e.g., originating Calling Party Number ("CPN"), Jurisdiction Indication Parameter ("JIP") and destination called party number, etc.) to enable each Party to issue bills in a complete and timely fashion. All SS7 signaling parameters will be provided, where technically feasible, including CPN, JIP and Originating Line Information Parameter ("OLIP") on calls to 8XX telephone numbers, calling party category, charge number, etc. All



privacy indicators will be honored. If either Party fails to provide CPN (valid originating information) or JIP on at least ninety percent (90%) of its total originated traffic, then traffic sent by one Party to the other Party without CPN or JIP, as is required by the first sentence of this Section (such traffic being hereinafter referred to as "Unidentified Traffic"), will be handled in the following manner. If the Unidentified Traffic is less than ten percent (10%), such Unidentified Traffic will be treated as having the same jurisdictional ratio as the identified traffic. If the Unidentified Traffic exceeds ten percent (10%), then the Party receiving such Unidentified Traffic shall notify the other Party in writing of such excessive Unidentified Traffic and the Parties will cooperate and exchange data as necessary to determine the cause of the CPN or JIP failure, to determine who originated such Unidentified Traffic and to assist in its correction. Provided, however, that if, after sixty (60) days following the receipt of such written notice, the Unidentified Traffic continues to exceed ten percent (10%) of the total traffic, all the Unidentified Traffic shall be treated as Intrastate toll and will be subject to Intrastate access charges.

#### **4.2 Intentionally Left Blank**

**4.3 Type-2B Interconnection.** Type-2B Interconnection involves Trunk side connection to the PRICE COUNTY Phillips End Office Switch. Type-2B facilities provide the capability to access only PRICE COUNTY subscribers NPA-NXXs served by that End Office Switch, and any PRICE COUNTY remote subtending that End Office Switch, as listed in Appendix C. If the Parties have established a direct Interconnection pursuant to Section 4.3 a, two-way Trunk group shall be provisioned by CHARTER between the PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch in Phillips, Wisconsin, and the CHARTER switch, head end and or other similar facilities for the exchange of traffic between the Parties networks. The Point of Interconnection shall be as provided in Appendix A Section I.

##### **4.3.1 Local Traffic.**

**4.3.1.1** The two-way Type-2B Local Traffic Interconnection will be used by CHARTER to deliver Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to PRICE COUNTY's NPA-NXXs listed in Appendix C.

**4.3.1.2** The two-way Type-2B Local Traffic Interconnection will be used by PRICE COUNTY to deliver Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to CHARTER's NPA-NXXs listed in Appendix C.

**4.3.2 ISP Bound Traffic.** Upon receipt of notice as provide in Section 5.1, CHARTER shall provision ISP Bound trunks as provided in Appendix A.I.c.

**4.3.2.1** The two-way, Type-2B ISP Bound Traffic Interconnection will be used by CHARTER to deliver ISP Bound Traffic to the ISP provider telephone numbers as provided in Appendix D, served by PRICE COUNTY.

**4.3.2.2** The two-way, Type-2B ISP Bound Traffic Interconnection will be used by PRICE COUNTY to deliver ISP Bound Traffic to the ISP provided in Appendix D, served by CHARTER.

**4.3.2.3** ISP Bound Traffic shall be subject to a Bill-and-Keep Arrangement.

**4.4 Indirect Interconnection:** Either Party may deliver Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic indirectly to the other Party for termination through the Telephone USA of Wisconsin, LLC Rice Lake, Wisconsin Tandem. The originating Party shall be responsible for payment of all tandem transit charges and all other charges payable to the transiting carrier(s) for transit service with respect to its originating Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic. The originating Party shall also be responsible for all costs and expenses of Trunks and other facilities needed to deliver its originated Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to and receive the other Party's originated Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic, from the transiting carrier(s).

**4.4.1 Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic**

**4.4.1.1** The indirect Interconnection will be used by CHARTER to deliver Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to PRICE COUNTY's NPA-NXXs listed in Appendix C.

**4.4.1.2** The indirect, Interconnection will be used by PRICE COUNTY to deliver Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to CHARTER's NPA-NXX listed in Appendix C.

**4.4.1.3** Intentionally Left Blank.

**4.4.1.4** Upon receipt of notice as provided in Section 5.1, CHARTER shall provision ISP Bound trunks as provided in Section 4.3.2 of this Agreement.

**4.4.2** Unless otherwise agreed, the Parties shall exchange all Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic indirectly through the Telephone USA of Wisconsin, LLC Rice Lake, Wisconsin Tandem until the total volume of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic being exchanged between the Parties' networks exceeds the centum call seconds busy hour equivalent of one (1) DS-1 (i.e., 500 busy hour centum call seconds, or combined traffic of 240,000 minutes per month if neither Party can measure centum call seconds), at which time either Party may require the establishment of direct Interconnection as provided in Section 4.3 of this Agreement ("Direct Interconnection Notice").

**4.4.3** After the Parties have established direct Interconnection in accordance with Section 4.3 of this Agreement between their networks, neither Party may continue to transit its originated Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic indirectly. However, if CHARTER continues to route traffic indirectly after a direct Interconnection is established PRICE COUNTY will accept this traffic subject to the compensation arrangements as provided in Appendix B.I.

**4.4.4** To the extent that CHARTER and a third party Tandem switch service provider other than Telephone USA of Wisconsin, LLC have entered into or may enter into arrangements for the delivery of CHARTER Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic to PRICE COUNTY for Termination to PRICE COUNTY end users, PRICE COUNTY will accept this traffic subject to the compensation arrangements as provided in Appendix B.I.

**4.4.5** Except as provided in Section 4.4.3 and 4.4.4 above, Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic exchanged by the Parties indirectly through transiting carriers, shall be subject to the same Reciprocal Compensation, if any, as Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic exchanged through direct Interconnection as provided in Section 5.1 of this Agreement.

**4.5** The Parties shall jointly engineer and configure Trunks for direct Interconnection of their networks over the Interconnection Facilities as follows:

**4.5.1** The Parties shall jointly engineer and configure the Interconnection Facilities as a direct transmission path between the two Parties.

**4.5.2** If the traffic volumes between any two (2) End Office Switches, at any time exceeds the centum call seconds busy hour equivalent of one (1) DS-1 (i.e. 500 busy hour centum call seconds) the Parties shall, within sixty (60) days of such occurrence, meet at PRICE COUNTY to provide augmentation to the existing trunk group or establish a new direct two-way trunk group to the applicable End Office Switches consistent with the grades of service and quality parameters set forth in this Agreement.

**4.5.3** Only valid NXX codes served by an End Office Switch, or a PRICE COUNTY remote switch that is served by that PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch, may be accessed through a direct connection to that End Office Switch.

**4.5.4** If additional Trunk groups are required under Section 4.5.2 above, CHARTER shall, upon request of PRICE COUNTY, provision within sixty, (60) days of such request additional two-way trunks, if necessary, provided that neither Party can require the other Party to build or provision unnecessary trunks.

**4.5.5** The End Office switches of both Parties involved in the provision of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic shall be managed in accordance with the applicable industry/Telcordia Technologies standards.

**4.5.6** Based on the physical architecture and compensation arrangements that are set forth in this Agreement, each Party shall be responsible for establishing and maintaining physical facilities and logical trunking on its side of the POI to provide for the Transport and Termination of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic consistent with the standards set forth in this Agreement.

#### **4.6 Common Channel Signaling.**

**4.6.1 Service Description.** The Parties will provide Common Channel Signaling (CCS) to one another via Signaling System 7 (SS7) network Interconnection, in accordance with prevailing industry standards. Use of a third party provider of SS7 trunks is permitted.

**4.6.2 Signaling Parameters.** All SS7 signaling parameters will be provided in conjunction with traffic exchange Trunk groups, where and as available. These parameters include Automatic Number Identification (ANI), Calling Party Number (CPN), Privacy Indicator, calling party category information, originating line information, wherever such information is needed for call routing, measuring, recording, or billing.

**4.7 Mid-Span Meet.** Subject to Section 4.4 above, either Party may request Interconnection through a Mid-Span Meet for the exchange of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic.

**4.7.1** A Mid-Span Meet is a fiber connection arrangement whereby the Parties physically interconnect their networks via an optical fiber interface (as opposed to an electrical interface). The Mid-Span Meet is the location where one Party's facilities, provisioning, maintenance, and financial responsibility, begins and the other Party's responsibility ends.

**4.7.2** If both Parties mutually agree to interconnect pursuant to a Mid-Span Meet, CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY shall jointly engineer and operate an OC-3 Synchronous Optical Network ("SONET") transmission system. The Parties shall interconnect their transmission and routing of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic via a local channel facility at the DS1 Level. The Parties shall work jointly to determine the specific transmission system. CHARTER's SONET transmission equipment must be compatible with PRICE COUNTY's SONET equipment.

**4.7.3** CHARTER shall, wholly at its own expense, procure, install and maintain the agreed upon SONET equipment in the CHARTER switch, head end or similar facility. PRICE COUNTY shall, wholly at its own expense, procure, install and maintain the agreed upon SONET equipment in the PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch.

**4.7.4** PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER shall mutually designate a Mid-Span Meet within the borders or at the exchange boundary, of the PRICE COUNTY exchange area, PRICE COUNTY shall make all necessary preparations to receive, and to allow and enable CHARTER to deliver, fiber optic facilities into the Mid-Span Meet with sufficient spare length to reach the splice point at the Mid-Span Meet.

**4.7.5** CHARTER shall deliver and maintain its fiber strands wholly at its own expense. PRICE COUNTY shall deliver and maintain its fiber strands wholly at its own expense. Upon verbal request by CHARTER, PRICE COUNTY shall

allow CHARTER access to the Mid-Span Meet entry point for maintenance purposes as promptly as possible.

**4.7.6** The Parties shall jointly coordinate and undertake maintenance of the SONET transmission system. Each Party shall be responsible for maintaining the components of their own SONET transmission system.

**4.7.7** Each Party will be responsible for providing its own transport facilities to the Mid-Span Meet.

**4.7.8** The Parties will mutually agree on the appropriate sizing for the facilities. The capacity of Interconnection Facilities provided by each Party will be based on mutual forecasts and sound engineering practice, as mutually agreed to by the Parties. CHARTER will order trunks in the agreed upon quantities via an Access Service Request.

## **5.0 COMPENSATION FOR EXCHANGE OF TRAFFIC**

**5.1 Local Traffic.** The Parties shall assume that Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic routed over the direct Interconnection Facilities originated by or terminating to the Parties' end user customers is roughly balanced between the Parties unless traffic studies indicate otherwise. Accordingly, the Parties agree to use a Bill-and-Keep Arrangement with respect to termination of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic routed over the Interconnection Facilities. Either Party may request that a traffic study be performed no more frequently than once every twelve months. Should such traffic study indicate, in the aggregate, that either Party is terminating more than sixty (60) percent of the Parties' total terminated minutes, either Party may notify the other Party, as described in Section 15.9 of this Agreement. Upon receipt of such notice CHARTER will provision direct ISP Bound Traffic trunks as provided in Section 4.3.2. If one Party is still terminating over sixty (60) percent of the remaining Local Traffic each Party will bill the other Party for termination of Local Traffic at the rates as provided in Appendix B.I.

**5.2 Interconnection Facilities.** If the Parties utilize direct Interconnection Facilities as described in Section 4.3 and Appendix A, CHARTER shall arrange for and maintain two-way Interconnection Facilities, as provided in Appendix A, between the PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch (Type-2B Interconnection as provided in Section 4.3) in Phillips, Wisconsin and the CHARTER switch, head end or other similar facility. Any nonrecurring and recurring cost of the two-way Interconnection Facilities between the POI as provided in Appendix A and the CHARTER switch, head end or other similar facility will be the responsibility of CHARTER. Any nonrecurring and recurring cost of the two-way Interconnection Facilities between the POI as provided in Appendix A and the PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch(es) will be the responsibility of PRICE COUNTY. As provided in Appendix A III. PRICE COUNTY will pay the cost of the two way Interconnection Facility from the POI to the PRICE COUNTY's End Office Switch(es).

**5.3 Traffic Recording.** In the event, that a traffic study is requested by either Party in accordance with Section 5.1 of this Agreement, the traffic recording and identification functions required to provide the study shall be performed by the Parties. Each Party will calculate terminating minutes of use based on standard Automatic Message Accounting

("AMA") recordings made within each Party's network. The Parties agree they will, to the extent feasible, make every reasonable attempt to accurately capture and report the actual usage exchanged between them for use in calculating the amount of traffic exchanged between the Parties, routed over the Interconnection Facilities. Should actual traffic information (measured terminating minutes of use) not be available, the Parties will mutually agree, within 30 days of receipt of a request by the other Party, on a suitable alternative basis for calculating the amount of traffic exchanged which most closely approximates the actual aggregate usage, e.g. exchange of originating records.

#### **5.4 Reciprocal Compensation**

**5.4.1** Reciprocal Compensation is applicable for Transport and Termination of Local Traffic and is related to the exchange of traffic described in Section 4.0, as applicable. To the extent that the Bill-and-Keep Arrangement in Section 5.1 is not utilized by the Parties because of an imbalance of traffic Termination as described in the last sentence of Section 5.1, then the Parties agree that for the purposes of billing compensation for Local Traffic, billed minutes will be based upon actual usage recorded. For indirect traffic as described in Section 4.4 records/reports provided by the transiting carrier shall be the basis for billing if actual usage records are not available. Measured usage begins when the terminating recording switch receives answer supervision from the called end user and ends when the terminating recording switch receives or sends disconnect (release message) supervision, whichever comes first. The measured usage is aggregated at the end of the measurement cycle and rounded to a whole minute. Billing for Local Traffic shall be based on the aggregated measured usage less traffic that is not Local Traffic.

**5.4.2** Subject to the conditions and exceptions described in Sections 4.4 and 5.4.1 above and 5.4.3 below, each Party shall pay the other Party for Transport and Termination of Local Traffic that either Party delivers to the other Party's network pursuant to the provisions of this Agreement. The charges and rates for Termination of Local Traffic shall be at the rates set forth in Appendix B of this Agreement. These charges and rates do not apply to any other types of traffic or for traffic delivered in any other areas other than those set forth in this Agreement as described in Appendix B.

**5.4.3** Neither Party will provide any compensation to the other Party for traffic associated with one-way paging services.

**5.5** If either Party exercises its right under Section 4.4.2 to require a direct Interconnection pursuant to Section 4.3, CHARTER shall pay PRICE COUNTY the CLEC Account Establishment charge as provided in Appendix B, if CHARTER fails to order the Interconnection Facilities as provided in Appendix A within forty-five (45) days after CHARTER's receipt of the Direct Interconnection Notice. The CLEC Account Establishment charge is a one-time only non-recurring charge. For avoidance of doubt, the charge authorized by this provision will be assessed only one time upon CHARTER, and will not be assessed unless CHARTER fails to comply with obligations set forth in this Section.

## **5.6 Intentionally Left Blank**

### **5.7 Affiliate Traffic**

**5.7.1** CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY agree that any traffic exchanged by CHARTER with any PRICE COUNTY Affiliate through the PRICE COUNTY Phillips, WI End Office Switch or the Telephone USA of Wisconsin, LLC Rice Lake, WI Tandem switch will be exchanged subject to all of the applicable terms and conditions of this Agreement.

## **6.0 NOTICE OF CHANGES**

If a Party makes a change in its network which it believes will materially affect the interoperability of its network with the other Party, the Party making the change shall provide at least ninety (90) days advance written notice of such change to the other Party.

## **7.0 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARTIES**

**7.1** The Parties shall jointly develop a schedule for promptly implementing all requirements of this Agreement ("Implementation Schedule"). Both CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY shall use commercially reasonable efforts to comply with the Implementation Schedule.

**7.2** The Parties shall exchange good faith, non-binding technical descriptions and forecasts of their originating traffic in sufficient detail necessary to establish the interconnections required to assure traffic Termination.

**7.3** Sixty, (60) days prior to requesting additional two-way direct Trunk(s), CHARTER will provide PRICE COUNTY with a six (6) calendar month, non-binding forecast of its Trunking requirements. Additional forecasting, of Trunking requirements will be provided by CHARTER to PRICE COUNTY as mutually agreed to by the Parties. The Parties agree that each forecast provided under this Section shall be deemed "Proprietary Information".

**7.4** Each Party is individually responsible: (i) to provide facilities within its network which are necessary for routing, transporting, measuring and billing traffic from the other Party's network; (ii) for delivering such traffic to the other Party's network in a mutually acceptable format and; (iii) to terminate the traffic it receives in that mutually acceptable format to the proper address on its network. The Parties are solely responsible for participation in and compliance with national network plans, including The National Network Security Plan and The Emergency Preparedness Plan.

**7.5** Neither Party shall use any of the Interconnection Facilities provided in this Agreement in any manner that prevents other Party from using their service or destroys the normal quality of service to other Party or to either Party's end users. Subject to the dispute resolution provisions of Section 14, which shall be deemed to include notice and a reasonable opportunity of the offending Party to cure any violation, either Party may discontinue or refuse service if the other Party violates this provision.

- 7.6** The characteristics and methods of operation of any circuits, facilities or equipment of one Party connected with the circuits, facilities or equipment of the other Party shall not interfere with or impair service over any circuits, facilities or equipment of the other Party, its Affiliate companies, or its connecting and concurring carriers involved in its services; or cause damage to the other Party's circuits, facilities or equipment, impair the privacy of any communications carried over the circuits, facilities or equipment or create hazards to the employees of the other Party, its Affiliate companies, or its connecting and concurring carriers or the public.
- 7.7** If such characteristics or methods of operation are not in accordance with the preceding paragraph, either Party will notify the other Party that temporary discontinuance of the circuit, facility or equipment may be required; however, when prior notice is not practicable, either Party may forthwith temporarily discontinue the use of a circuit, facility or equipment if such action is reasonable under the circumstance. In such case of temporary discontinuance, either Party will notify the other Party immediately by telephone and provide the other Party with the opportunity to correct the condition that gave rise to the temporary discontinuance. No allowance for such temporary interruption will be applicable.
- 7.8** Each Party is solely responsible for the services it provides to its customers and to other Telecommunications Carriers.
- 7.9** Each Party is responsible for administering NXX codes assigned to it.
- 7.10** Each Party is responsible for obtaining Local Exchange Routing Guide ("LERG") listings of Common Language Location Identifier (CLLI) codes assigned to its switches.
- 7.11** Each Party shall use the LERG published by Telcordia Technologies, or its successor, for obtaining route information and shall provide all required information to Telcordia Technologies for maintaining the LERG in a timely manner.
- 7.12** Each Party shall program and update its End Office Switches and network systems to recognize and route traffic to NXX codes assigned within the Mandatory Local Calling Scope to the other Party. All updates and network programming activities necessary to activate new NXX codes shall be completed by the time in which the code becomes effective in the LERG. In extraordinary circumstances, and after notice to the other Party, either Party may seek an additional seventy-two (72) hours to complete such tasks. Except as mutually agreed or as otherwise expressly defined in this Agreement, neither Party shall impose any fees or charges on the other Party for such activities.
- 7.13** At all times during the term of this Agreement, each Party shall keep and maintain in force at each Party's expense all insurance required by law (e.g., workers' compensation insurance) as well as general liability insurance for personal injury or death to any one person, property damage resulting from any one incident, automobile liability with coverage for bodily injury and property damage. Upon request from the other Party, each Party shall provide to the other Party evidence of such insurance (which may be provided through a program of self-insurance).



## **8.0 TERM AND TERMINATION**

**8.1** Subject to the provisions of Section 14, the initial term (“Initial Term”) of this Agreement shall be for three (3) years, which shall commence on the Effective Date. Absent the receipt by one Party of written notice from the other Party at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the Initial Term or any Renewal Term (as described below) to the effect that such Party intends to terminate this Agreement with or without cause, this Agreement shall automatically renew for an additional one year term (“Renewal Term”). In the event such notice of termination is provided, and either Party requests in good faith to negotiate a successor agreement under the provisions of the Act, this Agreement shall remain in effect (i) until this Agreement has been replaced by a new agreement, or (ii) for up to one hundred sixty (160) calendar days following the date of termination, whichever is earlier, unless either Party petitions for arbitration and requests that the term of this Agreement continue until the arbitrated agreement becomes effective.

**8.2** Upon termination or expiration of this Agreement in accordance with this section:

- (a) each Party shall promptly pay all remaining amounts (including any late payment changes) owed under this Agreement;
- (b) each Party’s indemnification and confidentiality obligations shall survive termination or expiration of this Agreement, for a period of three years.

## **9.0 CANCELLATION CHARGES**

Except as provided herein, no cancellation charges shall apply.

## **10.0 INDEMNIFICATION**

**10.1** General Indemnity Rights. Each Party (the “Indemnifying Party”) will defend and indemnify the other Party, its officers, directors, employees and permitted assignees (collectively, the “Indemnified Party”) and hold such Indemnified Party harmless against:

**10.1.1** Any loss to a third person arising out of the gross negligence or willful misconduct (“Fault”) by such Indemnifying Party or the Fault of its employees, agents and subcontractors; provided however, that (1) with respect to employees or agents of the Indemnifying Party, such Fault occurs while performing within the scope of their employment, (2) with respect to subcontractors of the Indemnifying Party, such Fault occurs in the course of performing duties of the subcontractor under its subcontract with the Indemnifying Party, and (3) with respect to the Fault of employees or agents of such subcontractor, such Fault occurs while performing within the scope of their employment by the subcontractor with respect to such duties of the subcontractor under the subcontract.

**10.1.2** Any claims for libel, slander, infringement of copyright arising from the material transmitted over the Indemnified Party’s facilities arising from the

Indemnifying Party's own communications or the communications of the Indemnifying Party's end users; and

**10.1.3** Any claims for infringement of patents where such infringement was caused by or arose from the services or facilities of the Indemnifying Party.

**10.1.4** Any loss arising from such Indemnifying Party's failure to comply with Applicable Law, including the Act or applicable FCC or Commission rule, regulation or order.

**10.2 Indemnification Procedures.** Whenever a claim for indemnification arises under this Section, the Indemnified Party, will promptly notify the Indemnifying Party and request the Indemnifying Party to defend the claim. Failure to so notify the Indemnifying Party will not relieve the Indemnifying Party of any liability that the Indemnifying Party might have, except to the extent that such failure prejudices the Indemnifying Party's ability to defend such claim or loss. The Indemnifying Party will have the right to defend against such claim in which event the Indemnifying Party will give written notice to the Indemnified Party of acceptance of the defense of such claim or loss and the identity of counsel selected by the Indemnifying Party. Until such time as Indemnifying Party provides such written notice of acceptance of the defense of such claim or loss, the Indemnified Party will defend such claim or loss, at the expense of the Indemnifying Party, subject to any right of the Indemnifying Party to seek reimbursement for the costs of such defense in the event that it is determined that Indemnifying Party had no obligation to indemnify the Indemnified Party for such claim or loss. The Indemnifying Party will have exclusive right to control and conduct the defense and settlement of any claims or losses for which it has given notice of acceptance of the duty to defend, subject to consultation with the Indemnified Party. The Indemnifying Party will not be liable for any settlement by the Indemnified Party unless such Indemnifying Party has approved such settlement in advance and agrees to be bound by the agreement incorporating such settlement. At any time, an Indemnified Party will have the right to refuse a compromise or settlement and, at such refusing Party's cost, to take over such defense; provided that in such event the Indemnifying Party will not be responsible for, nor will it be obligated to further indemnify the Indemnified Party against, any cost or liability in excess of such refused compromise or settlement. With respect to any defense accepted by the Indemnifying Party, the Indemnified Party will be entitled to participate with the Indemnifying Party in such defense if the claim or loss requests equitable relief or other relief that could affect the rights of the Indemnified Party and also will be entitled to employ separate counsel for such defense at such Indemnified Party's expense. If the Indemnifying Party does not accept the defense of any indemnified claim or loss as provided above, the Indemnified Party will have the right to employ counsel for such defense at the expense of the Indemnifying Party. Each Party agrees to cooperate and to cause its employees and agents to cooperate with the other Party in the defense of any such claim or loss, and the relevant records of each Party will be available to the other Party with respect to any such defense.

## **11.0 LIMITATION OF LIABILITY**

**11.1 Limited Responsibility.** Each Party shall be responsible only for service(s) and facility(ies) which are provided by that Party, its Affiliates, authorized agents,

subcontractors, or others retained by such Party, and neither Party shall bear any responsibility for the services and facilities provided by the other Party, its Affiliates, agents, subcontractors, or other persons retained by such Party. No Party shall be liable for any act or omission of another Telecommunications Carrier (other than an Affiliate) providing a portion of a service.

**11.2 Apportionment of Fault.** In the case of any loss arising from the negligence or willful misconduct of both Parties, each Party shall bear, and its obligation shall be limited to, that portion of the resulting expense caused by its negligence or misconduct or the negligence or misconduct of such Party's Affiliates, agents, contractors or other persons acting in concert with it.

**11.3 Limitation of Damages.** In no event will either Party have any liability whatsoever to the other Party for any indirect, special, consequential, incidental or punitive damages, including loss of anticipated profits or revenue in connection with or arising from anything said, omitted or done hereunder (collectively, "Consequential Damages"), even if the other Party has been advised of the possibility of such damages; provided that the foregoing will not limit (i) an Indemnifying Party's obligation under Section 10 to indemnify, defend and hold the other Indemnified Party harmless against any amounts payable to a third person, including any losses, costs, fines, penalties, criminal or civil judgments or settlements, expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees) and Consequential Damages of such third person, or (ii) a Party's liability to the other for willful or intentional misconduct or gross negligence. In no event, other than an obligation to make payments hereunder or to indemnify pursuant to Section 10, or liability for willful or intentional misconduct or gross negligence will either Party's liability to the other be greater than six (6) months of payments made to the other Party under this Agreement from the date such claim is first made. For purposes of this Section 11, a Party shall also include such Party's Affiliates, agents, subcontractors, or other persons retained by such Party.

**11.4 Force Majeure.** Neither Party shall be liable for any delay or failure in performance of any part of this Agreement from any cause beyond its control and without its fault or negligence including, without limitation, acts of nature, acts of civil or military authority, embargoes, epidemics, terrorist acts, riots, insurrections, fires, explosions, earthquakes, nuclear accidents, floods, power failure, volcanic action, other major environmental disturbances, unusually severe weather conditions, (individually or collectively a "Force Majeure Event")

**11.4.1** If a Force Majeure Event shall occur, the Party affected shall give prompt notice to the other Party of such Force Majeure Event specifying the nature, date of inception and expected duration of such Force Majeure Event, whereupon such obligation or performance shall be suspended to the extent such Party is affected by such Force Majeure Event during the continuance thereof or be excused from such performance depending on the nature, severity and duration of such Force Majeure Event (and the other Party shall likewise be excused from performance of its obligations to the extent such Party's obligations relate to the performance so interfered with). The affected Party shall use its reasonable efforts to avoid or remove the cause of nonperformance and the Parties shall give like notice and proceed to perform

with dispatch once the causes are removed or cease. Notwithstanding the preceding, no delay or other failure to perform shall be excused pursuant to this Section: (i) by the acts or omissions of a Party's subcontractors, materialmen, suppliers or other third persons providing products or services to such Party unless such acts or omissions are themselves the product of a Force Majeure Event, and unless such delay or failure and the consequences thereof are beyond the control and without the fault or negligence of the Party claiming excusable delay or other failure to perform, or (ii) if such Party fails to implement any steps taken to mitigate the effects of a Force Majeure Event (e.g. disaster recovery plans) in a nondiscriminatory manner during the period performance is impaired.

## **12.0 DISCLAIMER OF REPRESENTATION AND WARRANTIES**

**EXCEPT AS EXPRESSLY PROVIDED UNDER THIS AGREEMENT, NO PARTY MAKES OR RECEIVES ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, WITH RESPECT TO THE SERVICES, FUNCTIONS AND PRODUCTS IT PROVIDES OR IS CONTEMPLATED TO PROVIDE UNDER THIS AGREEMENT AND THE PARTIES DISCLAIM THE IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND/OR OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. ADDITIONALLY, NEITHER PARTY ASSUMES ANY RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO THE CORRECTNESS OF DATA OR INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE OTHER PARTY WHEN THIS DATA OR INFORMATION IS ACCESSED AND USED BY A THIRD-PARTY.**

## **13.0 REGULATORY APPROVAL**

**13.1 Commission Approval.** The Parties understand and agree that this Agreement will be filed with the Commission and may thereafter be filed with the FCC. CHARTER authorizes PRICE COUNTY to file a copy of this Agreement with the Commission on CHARTER'S behalf. Each Party covenants and agrees to fully support approval without modification of this Agreement by the Commission or the FCC under Section 252 of the Act. If the Commission or the FCC rejects any portion of this Agreement, the Parties agree to meet and negotiate in good faith to arrive at a mutually acceptable modification of the rejected portion of the Agreement; provided that such rejected portion shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Agreement. The Parties acknowledge that nothing in this Agreement shall limit a Party's ability, independent of such Party's agreement to support and participate in the approval of this Agreement, to assert public policy issues relating to the Act.

**13.2 Regulatory Changes.** Notwithstanding any provisions in this Agreement to the contrary, if any final and nonappealable legislative, regulatory, judicial or other legal action materially affects the ability of a Party to perform any material obligation under this Agreement, a Party may, on thirty (30) days' written notice (delivered not later than thirty (30) days following the date on which such action has become legally binding and has otherwise become final and unappealable) to the other Party require that the affected provision(s) be renegotiated and the Parties shall renegotiate in good faith such mutually acceptable new provision(s) as may be required; provided that such affected provisions shall not affect the validity of the remainder of this Agreement. If such provisions are

not renegotiated within sixty, (60) days after such notice, either Party may petition for arbitration pursuant to §252 of the Act. Except as otherwise provided for in this Section 13.2, neither Party waives any rights it might have under the Act and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder by the FCC and/or the Commission.

## **14.0 DISPUTE ESCALATION AND RESOLUTION**

**14.1 Procedures.** Except as otherwise provided herein, any dispute, controversy or claim (individually and collectively, a “Dispute”) arising under this Agreement shall be resolved in accordance with the procedures set forth in this Section 14.0. In the event of a dispute between the Parties relating to this Agreement and upon the written request of either Party, each of the Parties shall within five (5) business days from the written request appoint a designated representative who has the authority to settle the Dispute. The designated representatives shall meet as often as they reasonably deem necessary in order to discuss the Dispute and negotiate in good faith in an effort to resolve such Dispute. The specific format for such discussions will be left to the discretion of the designated representatives; however, all reasonable requests for relevant information made by one Party to the other Party shall be honored. If the Parties are unable to resolve issues related to a Dispute within thirty (30) days after the Parties’ appointment of designated representatives as set forth above, a Party may (i) bring an action in an appropriate federal district court, (ii) file a complaint with the FCC pursuant to Section 207 or 208 of the Act, (iii) seek a declaratory ruling from the FCC, (iv) file a complaint in accordance with the rules, guidelines and regulations of the Commission or (v) seek other relief under Applicable Law.

## **14.2 Billing and Payment; Disputed Amounts**

**14.2.1** PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER shall invoice each other on a monthly basis. Subject to Section 14.2.3, both PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER shall pay any invoice, in immediately available U.S. funds, within thirty, (30) days from the date of the invoice. Except as provided herein, there shall be no netting of the amounts due hereunder against any other amount owed by either Party to the other Party.

**14.2.2** Although it is the intent of both Parties to submit timely and accurate statements of charges, failure by either Party to present statements to the other Party in a timely manner shall not constitute a breach or default, or a waiver of the right to payment of the incurred charges, by the Billing Party under this Agreement. And the Billed Party shall not be entitled to dispute the Billings Party’s statement(s) based on such Party’s failure to submit them in a timely fashion. Neither Party will bill the other Party for previously unbilled charges for Services provided more than one year prior to the current billing date.

**14.2.3** If any portion of an amount due to a Party (the “Billing Party”) under this Agreement is subject to a bona fide dispute between the Parties, the Party billed (the “Non Paying Party”) shall within thirty (30) days of its receipt of the invoice containing such disputed amount give notice to the Billing Party of the amount it disputes (“Disputed Amount”) and include in such notice the

specific details and reasons for disputing each item. The Non-Paying Party shall pay when due all undisputed amounts to the Billing Party.

**14.2.4** If the Parties are unable to resolve the issues related to the Disputed Amounts in the normal course of business within sixty (60) days after the delivery to the Billing Party of the notice of the Disputed Amounts, then either Party may implement the procedures as provided in Section 14.1.

**14.2.5** The Parties agree that all negotiations pursuant to this subsection 14.2 shall remain confidential and shall be treated as compromise and settlement negotiations for purposes of the Federal Rules of Evidence and state rules of evidence.

**14.2.6** Any undisputed amounts not paid when due shall accrue interest from the date such amounts were due at the lesser of (i) one and one half percent (1.5%) per month or (ii) the highest rate of interest that may be charged under Applicable Law.

**14.3** Continuous Service. The Parties shall continue providing services to each other during the pendency of any dispute resolution procedure, and the Parties shall continue to perform their obligations, including making payments of undisputed amounts in accordance with this Agreement.

## **15.0** MISCELLANEOUS

### **15.1** Authorization

**15.1.1** PRICE COUNTY is a corporation duly organized, validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the State of Wisconsin and has full power and authority to execute and deliver this Agreement and to perform its obligations hereunder, subject to necessary regulatory approval.

**15.1.2** CHARTER is a limited liability company duly organized, validly existing and in good standing under the laws of the State of Delaware and has full power and authority to execute and deliver this Agreement and to perform its obligations hereunder, subject to necessary regulatory approval.

**15.2** Compliance. Each Party shall comply with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations applicable to its performance under this Agreement.

**15.3** Independent Contractors. Neither this Agreement, nor any actions taken by CHARTER or PRICE COUNTY, in compliance with this Agreement, shall be deemed to create an agency or joint venture relationship other than that of purchaser (or provider) and seller (or recipient) of services. Neither this Agreement, nor any actions taken by CHARTER or PRICE COUNTY in compliance with this Agreement, shall create a contractual, agency or any other type of relationship or third party liability between CHARTER and PRICE COUNTY end users or others.

### **15.4** Confidentiality

**15.4.1** Any information such as specifications, drawings, sketches, business information, forecasts, models, samples, data, computer programs and other software and documentation of one Party (a Disclosing Party) that is furnished or made available or otherwise disclosed to the other Party or any of its employees, contractors, agents or Affiliates (its “Representatives” and with a Party, a “Receiving Party”) pursuant to this Agreement (“Proprietary Information”) shall be deemed the property of the Disclosing Party. Unless Proprietary Information was previously known by the Receiving Party free of any obligation to keep it confidential, or has been or is subsequently made public by an act not attributable to the Receiving Party, or is explicitly agreed in writing not to be regarded as confidential, it: (i) shall be held in confidence by each Receiving Party; (ii) shall be disclosed to only those persons who have need for it in connection with the provision of services required to fulfill this Agreement and shall be used only for such purposes; and (iii) may be used for other purposes only upon such terms and conditions as may be mutually agreed to in advance of use, in writing by the Parties. Notwithstanding the foregoing sentence, a Receiving Party shall be entitled to disclose or provide Proprietary Information as required by any governmental authority or applicable law only in accordance with Section 15.4.2 of this Agreement.

**15.4.2** If any Receiving Party is required by any governmental authority or by Applicable Law to disclose any Proprietary Information, then such Receiving Party shall provide the Disclosing Party with written notice of such requirement as soon as possible and prior to such disclosure. The Disclosing Party may seek appropriate protective relief from all or part of such requirement or if it fails to successfully do so, the Receiving Party may comply with the requirement. The Receiving Party shall not interfere with the Disclosing Party’s efforts to obtain any protective relief, which such Disclosing Party chooses to obtain.

**15.4.3** In the event of the expiration or termination of this Agreement for any reason whatsoever, each Party shall return to the other Party or destroy all Proprietary Information and other documents, work papers and other material (including all copies thereof) obtained from the other Party in connection with this Agreement and shall use all reasonable efforts, including instructing its employees and others who have had access to such information, to keep confidential and not to use any such information, unless such information is now, or is hereafter disclosed, through no act, omission or fault of such Party, in any manner making it available to the general public. Proprietary Information required, to be returned does not include invoices and supporting detail (including switching records) relating to charges for the exchange of traffic.

**15.4.4** The obligation of confidentiality and use with respect to Proprietary Information disclosed by one Party to the other shall, survive any termination of this Agreement, for three (3) years unless a longer period is required by Applicable Law.

**15.5 Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the domestic laws of the State of Wisconsin without reference to conflict of law provisions and to applicable state and federal law.

**15.6 Taxes.** Each Party purchasing services hereunder shall pay or otherwise be responsible for all federal, state, or local sales, property, use, excise, gross receipts, transaction or similar taxes, fees or surcharges levied against or upon such purchasing Party (or the providing Party when such providing Party is permitted to pass along to the purchasing Party such taxes, fees or surcharges), except for any tax on either Party's corporate existence, status or income. Whenever possible, these amounts shall be billed as a separate item on the invoice. To the extent a sale is claimed to be for resale tax exemption, the purchasing Party shall furnish the providing Party a proper resale tax exemption certificate as authorized or required by statute or regulation by the jurisdiction providing said resale tax exemption. Failure to timely provide said resale tax exemption certificate will result in no exemption being available to the purchasing Party for the period of time until such certificate is provided.

**15.7 Non-Assignment.** This Agreement shall be binding upon the Parties and shall continue to be binding upon all such entities regardless of any subsequent change in their ownership. Each Party covenants that, if it sells or otherwise transfers to a third party, it will require as a condition of such transfer that the transferee agree to be bound by this Agreement with respect to services provided over the transferred facilities. Except as provided in this paragraph, neither Party may assign or transfer (whether by operation of law or otherwise) this Agreement (or any rights or obligations hereunder) to a third party without the prior written consent of the other Party which consent will not be reasonably withheld; provided that either Party may assign this Agreement to a corporate Affiliate or an entity under its common control or an entity acquiring all or substantially all of its assets or equity by providing prior written notice to the other Party of such assignment or transfer. Any attempted assignment or transfer that is not permitted is void ab initio. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, this Agreement shall be binding upon and shall inure to the benefit of the Parties' respective successors and assigns.

**15.8 Non-Waiver.** Failure of either Party to insist on performance of any term or condition of this Agreement or to exercise any right or privilege hereunder shall not be construed as a continuing or future waiver of such term, condition, right or privilege. PRICE COUNTY is a Rural Telephone Company and is entitled to all rights afforded Rural Telephone Companies under the Act including, but not limited to, exemptions, suspensions, and modifications under 47 USC 251(f). Upon request, PRICE COUNTY shall provide CHARTER with documentation supporting the fact that it is a Rural Telephone Company as defined in Section 153(37) of the Act. This Agreement does not affect, and PRICE COUNTY does not waive, any rights including, but not limited to, the rights afforded PRICE COUNTY under 47 USC 251 (f).

**15.9 Notices.** Notices given by one Party to the other Party under this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be (i) delivered personally, (ii) delivered by express delivery service, or (iii) mailed, certified mail or first class U.S. mail postage prepaid, return receipt requested to the following addresses of the Parties:



To: Catherine M. Mess, President  
Price County Telephone Company  
105 North Avon Avenue  
P.O. Box 108  
Phillips, Wisconsin 54555-0108  
Telephone Number 715-339-2151  
Fax Number 715-339-4512

With a copy to:  
John Mess  
Price County Telephone Company  
105 North Avon Avenue  
P.O. Box 108  
Phillips, Wisconsin 54555-0108  
Telephone Number 715-339-2151  
Fax Number 715-339-4512

With a copy to:  
Michael L. Theis  
Theis Communications Consulting, LLC  
7633 Ganser Way Ste. 202  
Madison, Wisconsin 53719  
Telephone Number 608-829-0271  
Fax Number 608-829-1754

To Charter Fiberlink, LLC:  
Attention Legal Department - Telephone  
12405 Powerscourt Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63131

With a copy to:  
Charter Communications, Inc.  
Carrier Relations - Telephone  
12405 Powerscourt Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63131

And:  
Charles A. Hudak  
Norman B. Gerry  
Friend, Hudak & Harris, LLP  
Three Ravinia Drive  
Suite 1450  
Atlanta, Georgia 30346-2117  
Phone: 770-399-9500  
Fax: 770-395-0000  
E-mail:  
chudak@fh2.com  
cgerry@fh2.com

or to such other address as either Party shall designate by proper notice. Notices will be deemed given as of the earlier of (i) the date of actual receipt, (ii) the next business day when notice is sent via express mail or personal delivery, or (iii) three (3) days after mailing in the case of first class or certified U.S. mail.

**15.10 Publicity and Use of Trademarks or Service Marks.** Neither Party nor its Affiliates, subcontractors, agents or other persons retained by such Party shall use the other Party's trademarks, service marks, logos or other proprietary trade dress in any advertising, press releases, publicity matters or other promotional materials without prior written consent.

**15.11 Compliance with Law.** Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as requiring or permitting either Party to contravene any mandatory requirement of Applicable Law.

**15.12 No Third Party Beneficiaries: Disclaimer of Agency.** This Agreement is for the sole benefit of the Parties and their permitted assigns, and nothing herein expressed or implied shall create or be construed to create any third-party beneficiary rights hereunder. Except for provisions herein expressly authorizing a Party to act for another, nothing in this Agreement shall constitute a Party as a legal representative or agent of the other Party, nor shall a Party have the right or authority to assume, create or incur any liability or any obligation of any kind, express or implied, against or in the name of or on behalf of the other Party. Except as otherwise expressly provided in this Agreement, no Party undertakes to perform any obligation of the other Party, whether regulatory or contractual, or to assume any responsibility for the management of the other Party's business.

**15.13 No License.** No license under patents, copyrights, or any other intellectual property right (other than the limited license to use consistent with the terms, conditions and restrictions of this Agreement) is granted by either Party or shall be implied or arise by estoppel with respect to any transactions contemplated under this Agreement.

**15.14 Technology Upgrades.** Nothing in this Agreement shall limit either Party's ability to upgrade its network through the incorporation of new equipment, new software or otherwise. Each Party shall provide to the other Party written notice at least ninety, (90) days prior to the incorporation of any upgrade in its network, which will materially impact exchange of traffic between the Parties over the Interconnection Facilities. Each Party shall be solely responsible for the cost and effort of accommodating such changes in its own network.

**15.15 Severability.** If any provision of this Agreement is held by a court or regulatory agency of competent jurisdiction to be unenforceable, the rest of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect and shall not be affected unless removal of that provision results, in the opinion of either Party, in a material change to this Agreement. If a material change as described in this paragraph occurs as a result of action by a court or regulatory agency, the Parties shall negotiate in good faith for replacement language that does not materially alter the economic effect of this Agreement on either Party as stated in Section 13.2.

**15.16 Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

**15.17 Amendments.** This Agreement may not be modified or amended other than by a written instrument executed by both Parties. Any amendment, modification or supplement to this Agreement shall be filed with the Commission and approved by the Commission as may be required by Applicable Law.

**15.18 Entire Agreement.** This Agreement, including any Appendices, referred to herein constitute the entire Agreement between the Parties with respect to the subject matter hereof, superseding all prior understandings, proposals and other communications, oral or written. Neither Party shall be bound by any preprinted terms additional to or different from those in this Agreement that may appear subsequently in the other Party's form documents, purchase orders, quotations, acknowledgments, invoices or other communications. This Agreement may only be modified, by a writing signed by an authorized representative of each Party.

**15.19 Miscellaneous.** By entering into this Agreement PRICE COUNTY does not concede that this is, and is not estopped from asserting that it is not, an interconnection agreement under 47 USC 251(c), nor does PRICE COUNTY waive, or is estopped from asserting, any rural exemption that it may have under 47 USC 251 (f). This Agreement is for the exchange of traffic, not interconnection of PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER as competing service providers. CHARTER shall obtain certification in accordance with Wis. Stat. 196.50(1)(b) 2 prior to providing Exchange Services within the authorized territory of PRICE COUNTY. By entering into the Agreement, PRICE COUNTY does not consent to such certification, and reserves the right to object to such certification. This Agreement does not apply to Traffic originated or terminated by a third party carrier.

[Remainder of Page Purposely Left Blank; Signature Page Follows]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have caused this Agreement to be executed by their duly authorized representatives.

Price County Telephone Company

By: Catherine M. Mess

Date: 11/7/07

Print: Catherine M. Mess

Title: President

Charter Fiberlink, LLC

By: [Signature]

Date: 11/2/07

Print: TED SCHREMP

Title: SVP & GM CHARTER TELEPHONE

## **Appendix A**

### **Schedule of Interconnection Facilities**

#### **I. Interconnection Trunks and Facilities**

a. Type 2B. If the Parties utilize direct Interconnection Facilities as described in Section 4.3, CHARTER shall arrange for and maintain direct Interconnection Trunks between the PRICE COUNTY End Office Switch (Type-2B Interconnection as described in Section 4.3) in Phillips, Wisconsin and the CHARTER switch, head end or other similar facility in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

b. Point of Interconnection For the exchange of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic utilizing direct Interconnection facilities in accordance with this Agreement, the Parties agree to initially connect twenty-four (24) Trunks using one (1) DS-1. On PRICE COUNTY's side of the POI, the DS-1 will be provisioned over PRICE COUNTY facilities between the PRICE COUNTY Phillips End Office Switch and the POI. On CHARTER's side of the POI, the DS-1 will be provisioned over CHARTER facilities between the POI and CHARTER's switch, head end or other similar facility. The POI will be at the PRICE COUNTY exchange boundary using PRICE COUNTY facilities located at the V and H coordinates: V 5430, H 4210.

c. Point of Interconnection For the exchange of ISP Bound Traffic utilizing direct Interconnection Facilities in accordance with this Agreement if separate Interconnection Facilities are required for ISP Bound Traffic pursuant to Section 5.1, the Parties agree to connect twenty-four (24) Trunks using one (1) DS-1. On PRICE COUNTY's side of the POI, the DS-1 will be provisioned over PRICE COUNTY facilities between the Phillips End Office Switch and the POI. On CHARTER's side of the POI, the DS-1 will be provisioned over CHARTER facilities between the POI and CHARTER's switch, head end or other similar facility. The POI will be at the PRICE COUNTY exchange boundary using PRICE COUNTY facilities located at the V and H coordinates: V 5430; H 4210.

d. The same physical facilities may be used for separate dedicated Trunks for Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic.

#### **II. Dedicated Facilities**

Per Applicable PRICE COUNTY Access Tariff.

#### **III. Cost Obligations for Interconnection Facilities**

- a. PRICE COUNTY shall be responsible for 100.0% of the Interconnection Facilities from the POI(s) to the PRICE COUNTY's End Office Switch(es).
- b. CHARTER shall be responsible for 100.00% of the Interconnection Facilities from the POI(s) to the CHARTER switch, head end or other similar facility in Eau Claire, WI.

## **Appendix B**

### **Schedule of Rates and Charges**

This Appendix specifies the rates for the Transport and Termination of Local Traffic and ISP Bound Traffic delivered by one Party to the network of the other Party and the charges for other services pursuant to the Agreement.

#### **I. Rates for Transport and Termination End Office Switching**

- a. Direct or Indirect End Office Switching rate: \$.030
- b. These rates are reciprocal and symmetrical for Local Traffic exchanged between PRICE COUNTY and CHARTER and apply for all Local Traffic MOUs.

#### **II. Dedicated Facilities and Services** Per Applicable PRICE COUNTY Tariff

#### **III. CLEC Account Establishment Charge** \$750

PRICE COUNTY will waive the CLEC Account Establishment Charge upon CHARTER ordering direct Interconnection Facilities as provided in Sections 4.4.2 and 5.5 of this Agreement, within forty-five (45) days of the Direct Interconnection Notice.

## Appendix C

### Exchanges and NPA/NXX's

#### I. Price County Telephone Company

<u>Rate Center</u>	<u>NPA/NXX</u>	<u>Applicable EAS/ECC Rate Center</u>
Phillips	715-339	Park Falls
Prentice	715-428	N/A
Soo Lake	715-332	Park Falls
Park Falls	715-744/762	Park Falls

#### II. Charter Fiberlink, LLC's NPA/NXXs

<u>Rate Center</u>	<u>NPA/NXX</u>	
Park Falls	715-518-9XXX	Phillips/Park Falls Soo Lake

## **Appendix D**

### **Internet Service Providers Telephone Numbers**

#### **I) Price County Telephone Company**

Internet Service Provider

Telephone Number

If a specific trunk group is provisioned pursuant to Section 4.3.2 and Section 5.1 herein the Parties agree to identify these ISPs and associated numbers here.

#### **II) Charter Fiberlink, LLC**

Internet Service Provider

Telephone Number

If a specific trunk group is provisioned pursuant to Section 4.3.2 and Section 5.1 herein the Parties agree to identify these ISPs and associated numbers here.



BASE RATE AND EXCHANGE AREA BOUNDARY MAP  
PARK FALLS, WISCONSIN

